



PSC NEWS

Missouri Public Service Commission

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PSC CHAIRMAN SUPPORTS AGA CALL FOR ADDITIONAL LIHEAP DOLLARS

Jefferson City (October 1, 2002)---Missouri Public Service Commission Chairman Kelvin Simmons today expressed his support for the American Gas Association's (AGA) call for more dollars to fund the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The AGA is asking Congress to appropriate a minimum of \$3 billion for LIHEAP in FY 03, including \$300 million in emergency assistance.

"There are people in Missouri and around the country who are hurting and in need of heating assistance and I support the AGA's request," stated Chairman Simmons.

In April, the Commission issued a consumer notice expressing its concern regarding natural gas prices for the 2002-03 winter heating season.

"Instability in the Middle East, increased industrial natural gas consumption and the likelihood of colder winter weather have all factored into a heating season equation which the federal Department of Energy indicates could mean higher natural gas prices this winter versus last," stated Chairman Simmons.

The federal Department of Energy has estimated that home heating costs will increase by an average of 17 percent for natural gas customers. "This comes at a time when the economy is struggling and many heating customers will find it difficult to make ends meet and keep their heat on this winter," stated Simmons. "I am hopeful that Congress will realize the need and that additional LIHEAP funding will be there for all who really need help with utility bills."